1. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses hTERT, said method comprising administering to said patient a cytotoxic T lymphocyte that kills said cell in an hTERT-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said cytotoxic T lymphocyte is autologous to said patient.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein said cytotoxic T lymphocyte is allogeneic to said patient.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said cytotoxic T lymphocyte is generated by activation with an antigen presenting cell that has been pulsed with hTERT or a peptide of hTERT that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

5. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses hTERT, said method comprising administering to said patient an antigen presenting cell that activates in said patient a cytotoxic T lymphocyte that kills said cell in an hTERT-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said antigen presenting cell was pulsed with hTERT or a peptide of hTERT that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

7. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of

comprising a cell that expresses hTERT, said method comprising administering to said patient hTERT or a peptide of hTERT that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule, wherein said hTERT or said peptide of hTERT is processed by an antigen presenting cell in said patient, which activates a cytotoxic T lymphocyte in said patient to kill said cell that expresses hTERT in an hTERT-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein hTERT or said peptide of hTERT is administered to said patient in association with an adjuvant.

9. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses hTERT, said method comprising administering to said patient a nucleic acid molecule encoding hTERT or a peptide of hTERT that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule, wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in said patient so that it can be processed by an antigen presenting cell in said patient, which activates a cytotoxic T lymphocyte in said patient to kill said cell that expresses hTERT in an hTERT-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encoding hTERT or a peptide of hTERT is in an expression vector.

11. The method of claim 1, 5, 7, or 9, wherein said patient comprises a tumor comprising cells that express hTERT.

12. The method of claim 4 or 5, wherein said antigen presenting cell is a

dendritic cell or a CD40-activated B cell.

13. The method of claim 4, 6, 7, or 9, wherein said peptide of hTERT binds to a class I major histocompatibility complex molecule.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein said class I major histocompatibility complex molecule is an HLA-A2 molecule or an HLA-A3 molecule.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said class I major histocompatibility complex molecule is an HLA-A2 molecule and said peptide of hTERT comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or said class I major histocompatibility complex molecule is an HLA-A3 molecule and said peptide of hTERT comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

16. A method of assessing the level of immunity of a patient to hTERT or a peptide of hTERT that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule, said method comprising measuring the level of cytotoxic T lymphocytes specific for hTERT or said peptide of hTERT in a sample from said patient.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said sample is obtained from said patient before or after a cancer treatment is administered to said patient.

18. An hTERT peptide that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

19. The peptide of claim 18, consisting essentially of the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or SEQ ID NO:2.

20. An *ex vivo* generated cytotoxic T lymphocyte that specifically kills a cell expressing hTERT in a specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

21. An *ex vivo* generated antigen presenting cell that presents a peptide of a hTERT in the context of a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

22. A method for identifying a universal tumor associated antigen, said method comprising the steps of:

a) analyzing one or more databases to identify a gene that is:

i) expressed in more than one human tumor type, and

ii) expressed in at least one human tumor type at a level that is at least 3-fold higher than the level at which it is expressed in a normal human cell;

b) using a computer-run algorithm to identify an amino acid sequence in the protein encoded by said gene that is predicted bind to a major histocompatibility complex molecule;

c) synthesizing an immunogen that comprises the amino acid sequence identified in step b), or a sequence that is predicted by a computer-run algorithm to bind to a major histocompatibility complex molecule with higher affinity than said sequence; and

d) testing the ability of said immunogen to stimulate a major histocompatibility complex-restricted cytotoxic T lymphocyte response that is specific for said protein.

23. The method of claim 22, further comprising, after step (d), testing the ability of a major histocompatibility complex-restricted cytotoxic T lymphocyte that is specific for said universal tumor associated antigen and is generated in step (d) to kill a malignant cell expressing said universal tumor associated antigen and not a non-malignant cell.

24. The method of claim 22, further comprising, after step (c) and prior to step (d), using a time-resolved, fluorometry-based assay to measure MHC binding and MHC/peptide complex stability of a peptide comprising the amino acid sequence identified in step (b).

25. The method of claim 22, wherein said major histocompatibility complex molecule is a class I or class II major histocompatibility molecule.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein said testing of said immunogen is carried out by contacting a cytotoxic T lymphocyte with an antigen presenting cell that has been pulsed with said immunogen.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said antigen presenting cell is a dendritic cell or a CD40-activated B cell.

28. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses a universal tumor-associated antigen, said method comprising administering to said patient a cytotoxic T lymphocyte that kills said cell in an antigen-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said cytotoxic T lymphocyte is autologous to said patient.

30. The method of claim 28, wherein said cytotoxic T lymphocyte is allogeneic to said patient.

31. The method of claim 28, wherein said cytotoxic T lymphocyte is generated by activation with an antigen presenting cell that has been pulsed with said universal tumor-associated antigen or a peptide thereof that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

32. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses a universal tumor-associated antigen, said method comprising administering to said patient an antigen presenting cell that activates in said patient a cytotoxic T lymphocyte that kills said cell in an antigen-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein said antigen presenting cell was pulsed with said universal tumor-associated antigen or a peptide thereof that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

34. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses a universal tumor-associated antigen, said method comprising administering to said patient said universal tumor-associated antigen or a peptide thereof that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule, wherein said antigen or said peptide thereof is processed by an antigen presenting cell in said patient, which activates a cytotoxic T

lymphocyte in said patient to kill said cell that expresses said antigen in an antigen-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

35. The method of claim 34, wherein universal tumor-associated antigen or said peptide thereof is administered to said patient in association with an adjuvant.

36. A method of treating a patient that comprises or is at risk of comprising a cell that expresses a universal tumor-associated antigen, said method comprising administering to said patient a nucleic acid molecule encoding said antigen or a peptide thereof that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule, wherein said nucleic acid molecule is expressed in said patient so that it can be processed by an antigen presenting cell in said patient, which activates a cytotoxic T lymphocyte in said patient to kill said cell that expresses said antigen in an antigen-specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encoding said universal tumor-associated antigen or said peptide thereof is in an expression vector.

38. The method of claim 28, 32, 34, or 36, wherein said patient comprises a tumor comprising cells that express said universal tumor-associated antigen.

39. The method of claim 31 or 32, wherein said antigen presenting cell is a dendritic cell or a CD40-activated B cell.

40. The method of claim 31, 33, 34, or 36, wherein said peptide of said universal tumor-associated antigen binds to a class I major histocompatibility complex molecule.

41. The method of claim 40, wherein said class I major histocompatibility complex molecule is an HLA-A2 molecule or an HLA-A3 molecule.

42. A method of assessing the level of immunity of a patient to a universal tumor-associated antigen or a peptide thereof that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule, said method comprising measuring the level of cytotoxic T lymphocytes specific for said antigen or said peptide thereof in a sample from said patient.

43. The method of claim 42, wherein said sample is obtained from said patient before, during, after, or before and after a cancer treatment is administered to said patient.

44. A universal tumor-associated antigen or a peptide thereof that binds to a major histocompatibility complex molecule.

45. An *ex vivo* generated cytotoxic T lymphocyte that specifically kills a cell expressing a universal tumor-associated antigen in a specific, major histocompatibility complex-restricted fashion.

46. An *ex vivo* generated antigen presenting cell that presents a peptide of a universal tumor-associated antigen in the context of a major

histocompatibility complex molecule.